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Community Connections: Winter 2007-2008

Boston University Medical Center, Department of Marketing/Public Affairs

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Boston University
Boston Medical Center’s physicians are among Boston’s best

BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER (BMC) DOCTORS WERE HONORED IN 32 SPECIALTIES – WITH SOME RECOGNIZED IN MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY – IN BOSTON MAGAZINE’S NEW LIST OF THE CITY’S BEST PHYSICIANS.

The November issue features a list of 76 medical specialties and subspecialties, and physicians in the Boston area. Ten interns are from BMC – more than any other single health-care institution – and 17 other BMC physicians were found in various pediatric categories.

“Our physicians are passionately committed to excellent patient care,” stated Elaine Ullian, BMC president and CEO. “They excel in their professions and are truly among the very best.”

The list was developed by Best Doctors, a local company that polls the medical profession every two years for nominations of physicians in their specialty to whom they would send a loved one.

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BMC Cardiologist George Philippides, MD, slices a cake at a recent celebration for Cardiac Care Unit staff named in Boston Magazine’s Best Doctors list. The celebration was organized by the unit’s nurses.

Soft drinks linked to heart disease

Drinking more than one soft drink daily — whether regular or diet may be associated with an increased chance of developing risk factors for heart disease, according to researchers at the Framingham Heart Study, a large, multigenerational study of risk factors for cardiovascular and other chronic diseases that began in 1948.

“We were struck by the fact that it didn’t matter whether it was a diet or regular soda that participants consumed, the association with increased risk was present,” said the study’s senior author Ramachandran Vasan, MD, senior investigator at the Framingham Heart Study and professor of medicine at the Boston University School of Medicine. “In those who drink one or more soft drinks daily, there was an association of an increased risk of developing the metabolic syndrome.”

Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of cardiovascular disease and diabetes risk factors including excess waist circumference, high blood pressure, elevated triglycerides, low levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL, “good” cholesterol) and high-fasting glucose levels. The presence of three or more of the factors increases a person’s risk of developing diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Prior studies linked soft drink consumption to multiple risk factors for heart disease. However, this study showed that association not only included drinking regular calorie-laden soft drinks, but artificially sweetened diet sodas as well, the researchers noted.

The study was reported in the journal Circulation.
New building projects underway at medical center

PLANS ARE UNDERWAY TO EXPAND THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (ED) AND BUILD A CLINICAL-SERVICES BUILDING BUILDINGS AT BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER (BMC).

An addition to the Menino Pavilion that will expand BMC’s Emergency Department (ED) began late last fall. A second project planned is a 6,000-square-foot ambulatory center at 75 Abbey St. that will replace the Downtown Outpatient at Harrison Avenue and other clinic space.

In addition to improving and expanding ambulatory space, these building projects will allow further consolidation of services and accommodate growth in volume.

“Consolidating clinical practices on campus ensures one standard of care and practice, and facilitates more efficient use of physicians and staff time,” said Gregory Grillone, MD, BMC’s acting chief officer, and associate professor of emergency medicine and surgery at BU School of Medicine.

According to Grillone, physicians will be involved in all space-programming discussions and in the design of the clinical floors in the new building.

BOSTON HEALTHNET

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS ARE AROUND THE CORNER

Boston HealthNet is an integrated health-care delivery network comprising Boston Medical Center, the Boston University School of Medicine and 15 community health centers. Physicians receiving primary care at HealthNet sites have access to highly trained specialists and cutting-edge technology at BMC, while maintaining individualized and culturally sensitive care in their neighborhoods. Free shuttle bus service is available from BMC to most of the health centers.

The Menino Pavilion expansion, scheduled for completion in fall 2009, will increase the size by almost 22,000 square feet. The basement level includes mechanical and storage space. The ED will expand by 11 beds (a 44 percent increase in adult medical/surgical ED beds), and the Radiology Department will gain a second magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) suite.

The second floor will be shell space for future expansion of the Menino Pavilion operating rooms and Post Anesthesia Care Unit.

The new ambulatory building, which is scheduled for completion in December 2010, will have more than 240,000 square feet of space and be nine stories high. The basement level will house radiology and phlebotomy services, the Internal Medicine Preceptor Assessment Clinic and support space. Patient reception, financial services and retail space will be located on the first floor.

The second floor will house a cafe for patients and staff, three floors will hold ambulatory clinical services, and the ninth floor will contain a new clinical laboratory.

Boston HealthNet

Community Health Centers

- Codman Square Health Center
- Dorchester House Multi-Site Center
- East Boston Neighborhood Health Center
- Governor Island Community Health Center
- Greater Throop Medical & Dental Center
- Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center
- South Boston Community Health Center
- South Boston Neighborhood Health Center
- Upham’s Corner Health Center
- Watertown Street Neighborhood Health Center

Boston HealthNet

Feeling good

Nineteen cancer survivors came from near (Dorchester, Mattapan, Roxbury, West Roxbury and Braintree) and far (Watertown, MA) to enjoy a massage, facial and makeup application by a Grady staff member, as well as a catered lunch and gift bag. The patients also received recommendations on how to adjust their beauty regimen while dealing with the emotional and physical hardships of chemotherapy.

The group included patients who completed chemotherapy and treatment members of the hospital’s Harlem-Creole Support Group.

For more information on cancer support services at BMC, call (617) 630-7540.

Boston Medical Center offers women new option for breast cancer detection

With skilled personnel and sophisticated new equipment, Boston Medical Center (BMC) is now among the elite medical centers in the Boston area offering high-risk women another option in detecting and diagnosing breast cancer.

For decades, regular mammograms have been part of preventive health for women. However, according to a new guideline of the American Cancer Society, women with an especially high lifetime risk (greater than 20 percent) of developing breast cancer should undergo annual magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans, as well as annual mammography.

“The two tests together give doctors a better chance of finding breast cancer early in these women, when it is easier to treat and the chances of survival is greater,” said Priyanka Sharan, MD, MPH, a BMC radiologist and associate professor of radiology at Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM).

“Use of magnetic resonance helps define the extent of the disease in a patient newly diagnosed with breast cancer and to screen women who carry the BRCA1/2 gene and have a 40 to 85 percent increased lifetime risk of breast cancer,” explained Sharan. “Additionally, the MRI helps us identify abnormalities that often are not seen on mammography, ultrasound or a physical exam.”

For the screening, a highly sensitive, scripted structure placed against the breasts transmits images to a CADstream workstation for processing. Viewing colors that show abnormal regions, BMC radiologists then interpret the images and decide whether or not the region might be cancerous and require a needle biopsy under MRI-guidance.

“The CADstream machine allows for rapid interpretation that increases the chance of successful individual treatment,” said Jianwei Tian, MD, a BMC radiologist and assistant professor of radiology at BUSM.

Current cancer-screening guidelines suggest that average-risk women begin annual mammography at age 40, and those at higher risk start screening sooner.

To make an appointment, call 1 (800) 841-4325.

BU School of Public Health helps China develop, improve health care

Eager to establish connections with China as it undergoes rapid change in its primary health care and public health networks, Robert Meenan, MD, MPH, MBA, dean of the Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) traveled to Shanghai this fall to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Shanghai Medical School at the Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

The Memorandum of Understanding, signed in September, will lead to faculty and student exchanges between the institutions and collaborative research on HIV/AIDS, community health, community mental health, and pharmaco-epidemiology as well as other topics.

“This is a remarkable time in China, for the delivery of primary care and for public health as the country converts to a market-driven economy,” said Meenan. “China faces challenges but also opportunities. There are many things our schools can learn from one another.”

Signing the document was part of a six-day trip to China for Meenan, who also gave a presentation at the fourth annual China Health Care Summit in Shanghai titled “Building a Primary Care System in China: Lessons from the U.S."

“I am particularly concerned about the possibility that they would cut public health,” he continued, “and that would be a tragedy in a country of 1.3 billion that has serious environmental health issues and must address such problems as smoking, diabetes and the AIDS epidemic.”

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Nakedly Tang and Joseph Adams-Alpin, students at the BU School of Public Health, take a dental impression at a clinic.

“Although the event was a success, more families need to be aware of programs like My CHIP.”

Student efforts may help recover missing children

Boston-area parents have a new tool to aid in the recovery of missing children thanks to the Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine’s (GSDM) chapter of the National Dental Association (NDA). The My Child Identification Program (CHIP) is held annually to aid in the rescue and recovery of Boston-area children.

According to the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, a child goes missing every 40 seconds in the United States. More than 800,000 children are reported missing each year, and another 500,000 go missing without ever being reported.

This fall, members of GSDM’s association chapter took dental impressions and mouth swabs at Roxbury Comprehensive Community Health Center.

“Americans are known for going to other countries and telling people what to do. I would hope that we go instead, to advise them — based on our experience — on what not to do,” said Meenan.

“There is a new reality in China, for the delivery of primary care and for public health as the country converts to a market-driven economy,” said Meenan. “China faces challenges but also opportunities. There are many things our schools can learn from one another.”

“Today, China is like every other country trying to figure out the eight billion heads of voices for the government and the market. I am particularly concerned about the possibility that they would cut public health,” he continued, “and that would be a tragedy in a country of 1.3 billion that has serious environmental health issues and must address such problems as smoking, diabetes and the AIDS epidemic.”

Feeling good

Members of the clinic (left to right) Kathy Fox, MPH, Priyanka Sharan, MD, radiologist, and Sabrina Atwood, RN, provide support and counseling to the patients. Sharan’s Cantor Health Center.

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New medical students experience community health

AS PART OF ORIENTATION, INCOMING STUDENTS AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE (BUSM) TOOK A GUIDED TOUR OF BOSTON THAT INCLUDED VISITS TO THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS, WHERE MANY OF THEM WILL RECEIVE SOME OF THEIR MEDICAL TRAINING.

Students visited one of four Boston Medical Center (BMC) Boston HealthNet community health centers – Codman Square Neighborhood Health Center, Dorchester House, South Boston Neighborhood Health Center, and Uphams’ Corner Neighborhood Health Center – where they learned about the population served and the history of the local health center in each neighborhood.

"By understanding a little about the history and geography of a community, these students will be better equipped to contribute to improving the health status of their patients," said Eric Hardt, MD, incoming student at Boston University School of Medicine.

Students also were taken through the South End, South Boston, Dorchester, Mattapan and Roxbury, where they learned about the history and demographics of each area, as well as the obstacles relating to health care that residents face.